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CREDENTIALS OF REPRESENTATIVES
TO THE FIFTY-FIRST SESSION
OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-second year

Letter dated 24 July 1997 from the Permanent Representative of Cambodia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to enclose herewith for your urgent attention the text of a letter dated 24 July 1997 from H.R.H. Prince Norodom Ranariddh, First Prime Minister of the Royal Government of Cambodia, addressed to Your Excellency concerning the Royal Decree to recall me from my position as Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Cambodia to the United Nations.

I would be deeply grateful if you could kindly circulate the text of the present letter and its annex as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 3, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) SISOWATH Sirirath
Ambassador Extraordinary and
Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative

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ANNEX

Letter dated 24 July 1997 from the First Prime Minister of the Royal Government of Cambodia addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to inform you that Prince Sisowath Sirirath, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Cambodia to the United Nations, is and will always be the legal Permanent Representative of the Royal Government of Cambodia, of which I am the First Prime Minister. Any attempt by my colleague Second Prime Minister Samdech Hun Sen, the Coup Leader of 5 and 6 July, and his collaborator, Acting Head of State Samdech Chea Sim, to recall Ambassador Sisowath Sirirath is unwarranted.

In his letter dated 24 July 1997 addressed to both Samdech Chea Sim, the President of the National Assembly, and Samdech Hun Sen, the Second Prime Minister, His Majesty King Norodom Sihanouk said that he had no advice and opinion concerning this request and that the Royal Government of Cambodia will have to decide and Samdech Chea Sim, the Acting Head of State, could sign the Royal Decree to recall Prince Sisowath Sirirath himself in the name of the King.

Firstly, may I be permitted to inform Your Excellency that under chapter II, article 21, of our Constitution, only His Majesty the King can deposit his signature to appoint high civil servants, members of the military as well as civilian officials and Ambassadors Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary.

Secondly, His Majesty the King has stated that it is up to the Royal Government of Cambodia to decide. Under the Royal Government of Cambodia, I am the legal First Prime Minister. There is no article anywhere in our Constitution which states that the Acting Head of State can remove from office any member of the Royal Government of Cambodia, Ambassador or Provincial Governor.

Thirdly, the statement by His Majesty the King that the Acting Head of State could sign the Royal Decree to recall Ambassador Sisowath Sirirath is prima facie unconstitutional because His Majesty the King knows full well that under the Constitution, if Acting Head of State Chea Sim wants to remove Ambassador Sisowath Sirirath, he can do so by himself in his own name. But His Majesty the King will not sign the Royal Decree. In the present situation of political turmoil in my country, none of the collaborators of the Coup Leader could decide or give any instructions on my behalf. The Royal Government of Cambodia is only half full. The true members of the FUNCINPEC party are not in it. It is composed of FUNCINPEC renegade members and some are under the threat of Hun Sen.

Our Constitution was effectively drafted so as to guard against a fait accompli such as the violent coup d'état that took place in my poor country on 5 and 6 July. As First Prime Minister, I strongly protest the illegal Royal Decree of Samdech Chea Sim, Acting Head of State, who as President of the Cambodian People's Party (CPP) sided with the Coup Leader Hun Sen. This is

clearly shown in his letter addressed to Your Excellency on 8 July 1997, in which he accuses me without justification of many crimes.

Ambassador Sisowath Sirirath cannot be removed from his present position as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Cambodia to the United Nations. When Ambassador Sisowath Sirirath was appointed it was upon my recommendation as well as that of Samdech Hun Sen. Therefore, without my approval, Ambassador Sisowath Sirirath cannot be recalled from his present position.

I would be deeply grateful if you would kindly so inform the members of the Credentials Committee, the Security Council and the General Assembly and circulate my letter as a document of the United Nations.

(Signed) NORODOM Ranariddh
First Prime Minister